

Horsham given a lesson

Wycombe Wanderers 3,
Horsham 0

AFTER their poor performance against Corinthian Casuals recently, Wycombe Wanderers bounced right back on Tuesday night when they outclassed Horsham in the Premier Midweek Floodlight League, semi-final. Two penalties from Keith Searle and a Kenny Swain goal sealed the passage to the final.

Apart from the goals, Wycombe hit the woodwork three times and had two efforts cleared off the line. They were totally in command for all but the first 15 minutes and put the Athenian League, Division 2 leaders firmly in their place. Horsham must now have a pretty good idea of what to expect when they join the Isthmian ranks next term.

For Wanderers it was a real boost before tomorrow's (Friday) important league encounter with Walthamstow (K.O. 3 p.m.) and Monday's Berks and Bucks Senior Cup final against Slough.

The key to the Blues' triumph lay in the speed and accuracy of their game. Horsham paid the penalty for waiting for Wycombe to come at them and never really adjusted themselves to the pace. Nevertheless, they also had their moments, including hitting the crossbar.

AGILE PETER

Their best quality was their willingness to shoot on sight and had it not been for an agile display by Peter Spittle, their powerful drives could well have upset the home side. Spittle, coming in for John Maskell the first choice keeper, gave a near faultless display.

Horsham started well with Barry Steer testing Spittle in the third minute with a rising drive from outside the area. Spittle pushed the ball over the top for a corner and from a second flag kick soon afterwards Wycombe were slow to clear. Towering centre-forward Dave Hutchins was on the ball in a flash and cracked a shot against the angle of the crossbar.

Wycombe soon settled after this slow start and after Searle had blasted high over the top they began to power forward via Kenny Swain on the flanks. Swain soon exposed the flaws in Steve Ibbitson, jinking past him on the touchline and flighting over some pin-point crosses.

In the 11th minute Horsham's jittery defence cracked. It was Ibbitson who sent a weak pass back to goalkeeper Dai Mason but the ball fell too short and

Keith Searle intercepted.

Gathering the ball, Keith just had it under control when Mason dived at his feet and upended the centre-forward. Aylesbury referee C. McKnight had no hesitation in awarding the penalty but it left Wanderers in something of a dilemma. Their usual penalty takers, Tony Horseman and John Delaney, had both missed recent spot kicks and so Searle was presented with the task. He placed his shot wide of Mason into the far corner, up the slope.

The pressure was maintained with Spittle belting the ball high upfield from his goalkicks. One sailed the whole length of the pitch and was gathered by Mason without another player touching the ball! Horsham, looking decidedly worried in defence, were harassed into errors which were quickly pounced upon by Rob Williams and Larry Pritchard.

Garry Cross kicked one effort from Searle off the line in the 17th minute and then Horseman almost made it 2-0, Mason blocking his close range effort after a glorious sweeping move out of defence. Then in the

space of 30 seconds, Wanderers struck the posts — twice. Firstly Hutchinson's drive beat Mason all the way but cannoned off the crossbar and then Williams hit a post with a 15-yard effort.

Six minutes into the second half Swain scored the goal he had been threatening all night. Again it was the speed of the move that wrecked the visitors as Horseman and Swain combined. Horseman's final pass was inch perfect and left Swain with only Mason to beat. Ken made no mistake, racing forward and planting the ball past the stranded keeper.

Horsham wilted after the second goal and when they gave away another penalty in the 61st minute their hopes of a place in the final were well and truly shattered. Searle brought the ball back from the by-line to Pritchard who headed towards the corner of the net only for Ibbitson to palm the ball out with his hand. The referee was right on the spot and Searle again obliged by sending Mason the wrong way for his second goal.

Four minutes later the industrious Pritchard almost made

it four when his header looped over Mason but struck the upright.

The visitors were subjected to a barrage of corners including three in a minute and Wiltshire almost put the ball into his own net to demonstrate their confusion. Delaney and Searle nearly added to the tally and Wycombe's one scare came in the dying minutes when Spittle blocked Cosham's shot after a rare breakaway.

After such entertaining football, it was disappointing to witness the bookings of Mills for a shocking foul on Spittle and then Williams for going in high on a tackle. But even this couldn't detract from an excellent team performance from Wycombe.

S.E.

Wycombe: P. Spittle; D. Gamblin, D. Bullock, J. Delaney, P. Birdseye, R. Williams, L. Pritchard, J. Hutchinson; A. Horseman, K. Searle, K. Swain. Sub.: A. Gane (not used).

Horsham: D. Mason; G. Cross, R. Adam, R. Summerfield, S. Ibbitson, T. Wiltshire, Wiltshire, R. Medhurst, B. Steer, C. Newstead, D. Hutchins (sub. K. Mills 70 mins), S. Cosham.

Attendance: 862.